

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 OMB-01

NIC-01 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 COME-00 EB-11

LAB-06 SIL-01 AID-20 CIEP-03 DRC-01 /185 W

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R 011058Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0161

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
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TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJ: ELECTIONS FOR PORTUGAL'S LARGEST CLUB -

IMPRESSIVE SHOW OF COMPETENCE AND ORGANIZATION
BY POLITICAL CENTER.

SUMMARY: CENTRIST POLITICAL FORCES LINKED TO PPD HAVE TAKEN 75 PERCENT OF VOTE OVER LOOSE COALITION LEFTISTS IN ELECTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP OF AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF PORTUGAL. RESULTS, ALTHOUGH CERTAINLY NOT AN ACCURATE SAMPLE OF WHOLE OF COUNTRY, SHOW CENTER CAPABLE OF MOUNTING IMPRESSIVE ELECTORAL AND PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. LEFTIST SPOKESMEN HAVE WARNED "DEMOCRATS" (READ LEFTISTS) TO LEARN FROM THEIR OPPONENTS ESSENTIAL MODERN ELECTORAL TECHNIQUES OR ELSE SEE CENTER TAKE UPCOMING CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AS EASILY AS THEY DID THE AUTOMOBIEL CLUB. END SUMMARY.

1. ELECTIONS FOR PORTUGAL'S CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ARE NOT SCHEDULED UNTIL NEXT YEAR. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, ELECTORAL ACTIVITIES UNDERWAY, WITH SELECTION TAKING PLACE FOR NEW LEADERS FOR CLUBS, UNIONS, TRADE ASSOCIATIONS, AND EVEN FOR CONSUMER GROUPS. ONE SUCH ELECTION IN PARTICULAR HAS AROUSED A GREAT DEAL OF PUBLIC ATTENTION, THAT FOR NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF PORTUGAL, THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST CIVILIAN ASSOCIATION WITH 67,500 MEMBERS. THE ELECTION WAS BILLED AS A DRESS REHEARSAL FOR THE BIG POLITICAL BATTLES TO COME, INASMUCH AS THE TWO CONTENDING SLATES, A AND B, BY AND LARGE WERE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMPOSED OF MEMBERS OF THE CENTRIST PPD ON ONE HAND (LIST B) AND COALITION OF COMMUNISTS, SOCIALISTS, AND UNATTACHED LEFTISTS AND UNION LEADERS ON THE OTHER (ALTHOUGH SOME ON LIST A CENTRISTS).

2. LIST A WAS LED BY DR. FERNANDO ABRANCHES FERRAO, 66, A PROMINENT LEFTIST LAWYER AND UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT IN THE 1971 ELECTIONS OF THE PORTUGUESE BAR ASSOCIATION.

LIST ALSO INCLUDED LEFTIST UNION LEADER CAIANO PEREIRA; AND A FORMER STAFF ASSISTANT IN OFFICE SOCIALIST RAUL REGO (WHEN HE MINISTER MASS COMMUNICATIONS).

3. LIST B LEADER WAS FRANCISCO PINTO BALSEMAO 36, EDITOR OF RESPECTED LIBERAL WEEKLY EXPRESSO, ONE OF DIRECTORS OF PPD, AND ON BOARD OF A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT FIRMS. OTHER PROMINENT PERSONS ON LIST B INCLUDED ANTONION PEDRO PINTO DE RUELLA RAMOS 35, A LAWYER AND EDITOR OF TWO NEWSPAPERS, AND PRESIDENT OF NEWSPAPER OWNER'S GUILD; ANTONIO ALBERTO DA FONSECA, ADMINISTRATOR OF CUF PORTUENSE, (OPORTO BRANCH OF NATION'S LARGEST COMGLOMERATE); MIGUEL DE SA DA BANDEIRA, LOCAL DIRECTOR OF HERTZ; JOSE DO EGIPTO MACEDO E CUNHA, A SEDES FOUNDER; AND LEONARDO GODINHO FERRAZ DE CARVALHO 33, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS WEEKLY TEMPO ECONOMICO.

4. THE DIFFERENCES IN PLATFORMS OF RESPECTIVE LISTS SUBSTANTIAL, BUT IT IS GENERALLY CONCEDED THAT ELECTION RUN NOT OVER BASIC ISSUES BUT OVER IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION OF MEMBERS OF LISTS AND ON PERSONAL POPULARITY RESPECTIVE LEADERS. LIST B MADE MAJOR EFFORT TO GET OUT VOTERS. IT DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT LISBON AND SURROUNDING SUBURBS ELABORATE AND COSTLY BROCHURES DESCRIBING BACKGROUND ITS CANDIDATES, ITS PLAN OF ACTION, ETC. MANY VOLUNTEERS VISITED SUPERMARKETS AND PUT LITERATURE ON CAR WINDSHIELDS IN AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF ELECTIONEERING KNOWHOW. A MASSIVE RADIO, TV, AND PRESS CAMPAIGN WAS ALSO LAUNCHED, AND SOME 4500 PROXY VOTES WERE LINED UP IN ADVANCE FROM CLUB MEMBERS OUTSIDE LISBON AREA. LIST A IN CONTRAST SHOWED ITSELF UNWILLING OR INCAPABLE OF MOUNTING AN EQUALLY EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN (THEY DID HOWEVER CAMPAIGN, AND SENT PROPAGANDA TO ALL CLUB MEMBERS).

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5. TURNOUT ON ELECTION DAY WAS 8500 LARGEST IN CLUB HISTORY (ALTHOUGH ONLY 13 PERCENT OF TOTAL MEMBERSHIP). LIST B OVERWHELMED OPPONENTS BY VOTE OF 6637 TO 1744. LIST A LEADERS IMMEDIATELY CRIED "FOUL" WHEN DEFEAT CERTAIN, AND ALLEGED THEY ONLY OVERCOME BECAUSE A) OPPONENTS IN EFFECT "BOUGHT VOTES" AND PLAYED DIRTY BY SPENDING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS ON CAMPAIGN; B) THAT BALSEMAO CALLED OUT PPD EN MASSE TO SWING VOTE IN HIS FAVOR (BALSEMAO LATER REJECTED THIS CHARGE, ASSERTING ONLY 3 OTHERS ON HIS LIST ACTIVE WITH PPD, BUT PROMISED TO TRY TO RECRUIT IN FUTURE AS MANY CLUB MEMBERS AS POSSIBLE FOR PPD RANKS); C) PEOPLE (WHO THEY CLAIM WOULD HAVE VOTED FOR LIST A) STAYED HOME BECAUSE OF HEAT, APATHY, ETC.

6. EDITORIAL COMMENT DAY AFTER ELECTIONS GENERALLY POINTED OUT POLITICAL ASPECTS OF CONTEST, AND EMPHASIZED LARGE SUMS SPENT BY LIST B ON PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. DIARIO POPULAR OBLIQUELY COMPLAINED THAT IT IS WELL KNOWN THE DEGREE TO WHICH PUBLIC OPINION CAN BE INFLUENCED BY CAMPAIGNING A LA "AMERICANA".

7. REPUBLICA'S RESIDENT BARB, ARTUR PORTELA FILHO, COMMENTED THAT NOTHING GUARANTEES CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS WILL HAVE SAME OUTCOME. HOWEVER, HE WROTE, ELECTION WAS DEFEAT FOR LEFT AND DOWS SHOW THAT PROPAGANDA AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY CAN SWAY PEOPLE'S VOTES. RATHER THAN CRITICIZE LIST B FOR ITS SHOW OF EFFICIENCY, LIST A SHOULD INDULGE IN SELF-CRITICISM, AND REALIZE THAT PROPAGANDA IS NOT CHEATING BUT RATHER ESSENTIAL. LEFT SHOULD LEARN THAT HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES ARE CURCIAL IF INDECISION, CENTRISM, AND DOUBTS OF AVERAGE VOTER ARE TO BE OVERCOME, WHICH IS SOMETHING TRADITIONAL, FRATERNAL, ROMANTIC CAMPAIGN TECHNIQUES OF LEFT CANNOT ACCOMPLISH. UNLESS LEFT SHAPES UP, HE IMPLIED THAT ANSWER MIGHT BE AFFIRMATIVE TO HIS RHETORICAL QUESTION: "WILL 1975 BRING DEGAULLE AND GISCARD TO PORTUGAL?" (READ SPINOLA AND PPD).

COMMENT: SINCE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM IN PORTUGAL TODAY IS THAT COMMUNISTS HAVE MONOPOLY ON POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TECHNIQUES, IT IS SOMEWHAT REFRESHING TO SEE THE CENTER EMERGE VICTORIOUS IN A TEST OF STRENGTH WITH LEFT. BALSEMAO VICTORY SHOULD NOT BE OVERESTIMATED. WHILE HE NOW HAS MORE LR LESS CAPTIVE AUDIENCE OF SOME 70,000 AUTO CLUB MEMBERS, THOSE WHO DO NOT OWN CARS FORM AN IMMENSELY LARGER CONSTITUENCY. INDEED, AMONG THESE HAVE-NOTS, THE COMMUNISTS NOW HAVE TELLING EVIDENCE THAT THE PPD IS THE PARTY OF THE HAVES. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER SMALL THE SCALE, THE AUTO CLUB ELECTION HAS SOWN POLITICAL CENTRISTS THAT, DESPITE LEFTIST DOMINATION OF THE MEDIA DNA THE MUCH-VAUNTED COMMUNIST ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY, ELECTORAL EFFORTS BY THE CENTER CAN PAY DIVIDENDS.
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